



Ninety-Seventh Legislature - First Session - 2001
Committee Statement
LB 272

Hearing Date: 2/14/2001

Committee On: Judiciary

Introducers: (Thompson, Aguilar, Bourne, Brashear, Byars, Chambers, Hilgert, Jensen, Kruse, Dw. Pedersen, Preister, Price, Raikes, Robak, Suttle)

Title: Adopt the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Institute Act

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

Advanced to General File

X Advanced to General File with Amendments

Indefinitely Postponed

Vote Results:

7	Yes	Senators Baker, Bourne, Chambers, Connealy, Pedersen, Robak, Tyson
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No

1	Present, not voting	Senator Brashear
	Absent	

Proponents:

Senator Nancy Thompson
Carlene Bourn

Representing:

Introducer
Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Jeff Golden

Representing:

Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative Bill 272 creates the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Institute Act (Act).

The bill creates the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Institute (Institute), to be located at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), to address the need for increased research, coordination, and communication between juvenile justice entities. The bill explains that such is needed because minority youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system, the rate of juvenile incarceration is substantially higher in Nebraska than in peer states, and an more juveniles committed to state custody have specialized treatment needs.

Under Legislative Bill 272, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents may establish the Institute at UNO, employ the director of the Institute located in the Department of Criminal Justice, and assign or employ other professors and personnel considered necessary.

The Board of Regents may also accept and administer funds to operate the Institute. The Board of Regents shall request an appropriation of such money from the General Fund to operate the Institute efficiently and to promote the purposes of the Act.

The purposes and functions of the Institute include:

- Providing communication and coordination between local and state agencies responsible for juvenile justice services;
- Using applied research to identify and address the juvenile justice system's needs;
- Monitoring and addressing the overrepresentation of juveniles based on their race and gender; and
- Providing education and training to juvenile justice practitioners.

Legislative Bill 272 provides that when the Institute requests or deems it appropriate, any agency involved in activities related to juvenile justice shall cooperate with and offer expertise to the Institute.

A Juvenile Justice Advisory Council is created under Legislative Bill 272 to assist the Institute in carrying out its purposes and functions. The following members shall meet at least twice per year:

- Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Services,
- Probation administrator of the Office of probation Administration,
- Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice,
- A juvenile court judge appointed by the County Court Judges Association,
- A juvenile court judge appointed by the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice, and
- Director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center on Children, Families and the Law.

Legislative Bill 272 amends the current statute relating to the University of Nebraska's colleges and institutes to include the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Institute at UNO.

Explanation of amendments, if any:

The amendment clarifies language describing the University of Nebraska's Board of Regents' opportunity to employ a director of the proposed Nebraska Juvenile Justice Institute.

In addition, the amendment changes the word "shall" to "may" in describing the University of Nebraska's Board of Regents requesting an appropriation of money from the General Fund to operate and promote the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Institute.

Senator Kermit A. Brashear, Chairperson
